

In the Claims:

Kindly amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) Method for closing off at least one tunnel extending across the width of a folding curtain, after a strengthening rod has been inserted into this tunnel, characterized in that a strengthening rod is provided in the tunnel, comprising ~~at least at one extremity a force~~ generating member that extends or contracts in a longitudinal direction and a number of pointed projections ~~[[,]]~~ positioned such that extension of the force generating member causes the pointed projections to extend in a radial direction as well as the longitudinal direction, and in that the tunnel is closed by extending the force generating member and pricking the ~~said~~ pointed projections through the wall of the tunnel, ~~wherein the said projections are movable in the longitudinal direction of the strengthening rod against a spring force.~~
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the ~~said~~ pointed projections are part of a terminal element, provided on the strengthening rod.
4. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 3, characterized in that the ~~said~~ terminal element is carried out in the form of a ~~sleeve~~ jacket provided on the extremity of the strengthening rod.
5. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 3, characterized in that the terminal element ~~is provided with a~~ comprises the force generating member ~~in order to exert a spring force on the said projections.~~
6. (Currently amended) Folding curtain comprising at least one tunnel extending across the width of the curtain, which is provided with a strengthening rod, characterized in that the ~~said~~ strengthening rod comprises a force generating member that extends or contracts in a longitudinal direction and a number of pointed projections positioned such that extension of the force generating

member causes the pointed projections to extend in a radial direction as well as the longitudinal direction at least at one extremity and in that the ~~said~~ projections are pricking through the wall of the tunnel in order to close the tunnel, ~~wherein the said projections are movable in the longitudinal direction of the strengthening rod against a spring force.~~

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently amended) Folding curtain according to claim 6, characterized in that the ~~said~~ pointed projections are part of a terminal element provided on the strengthening rod.

9. (Currently amended) Folding curtain according to claim 8, characterized in that the ~~said~~ terminal element comprises a ~~sleeve-shaped~~ jacket containing ~~[[a]]~~ the force generating member and an element provided with the said pointed projections and in that the element is movable against the spring force of the force generating member.

10. (Currently amended) Folding curtain according to claim 6, characterized in that the ~~element is provided with~~ pointed projections are made of synthetic material.

11. (Currently amended) Strengthening rod for a folding curtain, characterized in that ~~at least one extremity of the~~ said strengthening rod comprises a force generating member that extends or contracts in a longitudinal direction and a number of pointed projections positioned such that extension of the force generating member ~~movable against a spring force in the longitudinal direction of the strengthening rod~~ causes the pointed projections to extend in a radial direction as well as the longitudinal direction and in that the ~~said~~ projections are provided to prick through and grip ~~[[the]]~~ a wall of ~~[[the]]~~ a curtain tunnel, in order to close the tunnel.

12. (Currently amended) Strengthening rod according to claim 11, characterized in that the ~~said~~ projections are part of a terminal element provided on the strengthening rod.

13. (Currently amended) Strengthening rod according to claim 11, characterized in that the said strengthening rod comprises a ~~sleeve-shaped~~ jacket containing ~~[[a]]~~ the force generating member

and an element provided with the said pointed projections and in that the element is movable against the spring force of the force generating member from a first to a second position, the element in its second position being situated within the space surrounded by the ~~sleeve-shaped~~ jacket.

14. (Currently amended) Strengthening rod according to claim 11, characterized in that the ~~said~~ strengthening rod is provided in a folding curtain according to any one of the claims 6 up to and including 10.

15. (Currently amended) ~~Strengthening rod~~ Method according to claim 5, wherein the force generating member is a coiled spring.

16. (Currently amended) ~~Strengthening rod~~ Folding curtain according to claim ~~[[9]]~~ 18, wherein the force generating member is a coiled spring.

17. (Currently amended) Strengthening rod according to claim ~~[[13]]~~ 19, wherein the force generating member is a coiled spring.

18. (New) Folding curtain comprising at least one tunnel extending across the width of the curtain, which is provided with a strengthening rod, characterized in that the strengthening rod comprises a force generating member that extends or contracts in a longitudinal direction and a number of pointed projections positioned such that extension of the force generating member causes the pointed projections to extend in the longitudinal direction and in that the projections are pricking through the wall of the tunnel in order to close the tunnel, wherein the projections are part of a terminal element provided on the strengthening rod, the terminal element comprises a jacket provided on the extremity of the strengthening rod, and the pointed projections move into and out of a position completely contained within the space surrounded by the jacket.

19. (New) Strengthening rod for a folding curtain, characterized in that said strengthening rod comprises a force generating member that extends or contracts in a longitudinal direction and a number of pointed projections positioned such that extension of the force generating member causes

the pointed projections to extend in the longitudinal direction and in that the projections are provided to prick through and grip a wall of a curtain tunnel, in order to close the tunnel, wherein the projections are part of a terminal element provided on the strengthening rod, the terminal element comprises a jacket provided on the extremity of the strengthening rod, and the pointed projections move into and out of a position completely contained within the space surrounded by the jacket.

20. (New) Folding curtain according to claim 18, characterized in that the pointed projections are made of synthetic material.

21. (New) Folding curtain according to claim 18, characterized in that the jacket contains the force generating member and an element provided with the said pointed projections and in that the element is movable against the spring force of the force generating member.

22. (New) Strengthening rod according to claim 19, characterized in that the jacket contains the force generating member and an element provided with the said pointed projections and in that the element is movable against the spring force of the force generating member from a first to a second position, the element in its second position being situated within the space surrounded by the jacket.

23. (New) Strengthening rod according to claim 19, characterized in that the said strengthening rod is provided in a folding curtain according to any one of the claims 6 up to and including 10.